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INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC

UNCLAS BUDAPEST 000836

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/IHB AND EUR/NCE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KFLU](#) [TBIO](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [HU](#)
SUBJECT: H1N1 OFFICIALLY AN EPIDEMIC IN HUNGARY,
VACCINATION RATES EXPECTED TO RISE

REF: BUDAPEST 815 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On November 18, with over 20,000 new reported cases of H1N1 infections in the past week, GOH health authorities officially declared an epidemic. Ample supplies of locally produced vaccine Fluval P are available, and approximately 11 percent of the population (about 1 million) has been vaccinated.
End Summary.

¶2. (U) On November 18, GOH health officials announced that H1N1 flu cases officially reached epidemic proportions, with close to 22,000 residents reporting symptoms of the virus in the past week (Note: 20,000 infections per week was the government's established threshold for declaring an epidemic. End note). Currently, seven people have died while infected with the virus, and 170 are being treated in hospitals.

¶3. (SBU) Dr. Istvan Szolnoki, an epidemiologist at the National Public Health and Medical Officers Service (ANTSZ) told econoff that hospitals have adequate supplies of antiviral medications. He added that there are currently 4,000,000 doses of locally produced Fluval P vaccine available, with the GOH expecting delivery of 2,000,000 additional doses from local pharmaceutical company Omnivest. Omnivest has stated it can manufacture 500,000 doses per week. The GOH is establishing vaccination centers in hospitals and health centers around the country to help increase the vaccination rate. Dr. Szolnoki said that since H1N1 is now an epidemic the vaccine will be free of charge to certain high-risk target groups: those with chronic illnesses; children 1-18 years old; adults over 60 years old; pregnant women; and, healthcare workers. While warning that predictions are difficult, Szolnoki stated that he expects a maximum of 60,000 new cases per week once the pandemic reaches its peak.

¶4. (SBU) Szolnoki also stated that although there is ample supply of vaccine, the Ministry of Health is nonetheless considering a measure to limit future shipments of vaccine to pharmacies to ensure an ample supply to vaccination centers, hospitals, and clinics. (Note: Hospitals and clinics in Hungary do not typically procure/store vaccines. It is standard practice for individuals to purchase vaccine in pharmacies with a doctor's prescription, then bring the vaccine to their doctor for administration. End note.) Szolnoki stated that by law pharmacies must accept prescriptions from any EU member state. As Hungary is well supplied with vaccine relative to some of its neighbors, this has led to a spike in demand at pharmacies near EU border states. Szolnoki emphasized that the measure to limit shipments to pharmacies is only under consideration at this point.

15. (SBU) The National Public Health and Medical Officers Service continues to recommend against school closures, stating that the best course of action is for children to get vaccinated. In an effort to discourage schools from closing, the Education Minister stated earlier this week that days lost to school closure may lead to an extension of the school year.
LEVINE